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III.—*On the Wild Tribes of the North-West Coast of Borneo.*

By the LORD BISHOP OF LABUAN.

THE Lord Bishop of Labuan said: When I was asked by your President to attend here this evening, I told him I had not time to prepare any regular paper. I have, therefore, come merely to state verbally a few facts about Borneo, which is an enormous island. I have been residing at its north-west point. Sarawak, the sovereignty of Sir James Brooke there, has had its original boundaries considerably increased through recent events, and they now extend beyond Muka.

In 1859, the Mahomedans, pretending they had an order from the Sultan to that effect, attempted to crush the Christian population, and take the government into their own hands; but they were defeated by Sir James Brooke, whose personal influence with the Malays and Dyaks is really wonderful. To obtain the extension of territory, he has undertaken to secure to the Sultan of Brune a yearly revenue of 6,000 dollars from it.

There is a range of mountains here, and a high one too, but not disposed as it is placed on ordinary maps; in reality trending longitudinally. Mount Keni Baluor is 14,000 feet high.

The island itself is from nine hundred to a thousand miles long by eight hundred broad, and well supplied with rivers. The Sarawak flows into the sea by five mouths, and is the principal river in Sir James Brooke's domains, which is closed by mountains on every side except the sea, and forms a kind of amphitheatre. It is a most wonderfully watered country. We may be almost said to live in our boats there, for we have to go about from place to place in them; but our houses are built on the banks of the rivers, which are high. The reason of the abundance of water is, that this region is within the wet climate of the equator, and we have therefore naturally large rivers. Up the Raganz river I have proceeded for a distance of a hundred and twenty miles, and found it half a mile broad, and seventeen fathoms deep. I do not mean to say that it is everywhere as deep; but, at the same time, there are places where it is deeper and wider.

The interior of the country round Sarawak consists chiefly of limestone. Nearer the sea, there are hills of sandstone; and on the coast we come into a country of granitic, volcanic, and primitive rocks. One part of the Sarawak, about half way between the sea and the source of the river, is known for its mines of antimony. Here, also, gold is found; and this is constantly alluring the Chinese to the place as gold diggers. These, as you are aware, caused us, in 1857, considerable trouble. Sir James Brooke, finding them there, had allowed them to have their own laws,

and thus they grew to be an *imperium in imperio*; and, when they imagined themselves strong enough, they attempted to throw over his rule. For a while they had pretty much their own way; and, getting me in a fort, they wished to set me up in his place. Sir James, however, again got the upper hand, and they have been good subjects since.

It has been said that the country has no good harbours; but the mouths of the rivers form excellent ones, into some of which ships can enter with ease. At the Santutong, or mouth of the Sarawak, there are four fathoms of water at the lowest state of the tide. There were only three fathoms when Sir E. Beecher surveyed it, but the channel has since deepened. Of course there are some sand banks, and careful navigation is necessary; but the several rivers are for the most part navigable for twenty or thirty miles from the sea. About a hundred and fifty miles to the north-east there is a very important river, called the Muka, which traverses the flat native districts of the sago, the greatest part of which article of commerce brought to Singapore comes from thence. The river was lately in dispute, but is now under Sir James Brooke's government. Along the coast from Sarawak to Labuan there are everywhere signs of coal; and on the Sadong, a large river running into the Sarawak bay, a valuable mine was worked by the Borneo Company. The vein was above four feet thick, and was worked to a fault; that is, until it was split by a vein of clay. At Labuan, Colong, and up all the rivers, deposits of excellent coal were seen. It was a good steam-coal, and better than any brought out there from England, for such cargoes get spoilt on their voyage. It burns like Welsh free-coal. This, however, was not an ethnological question, although it might be an interesting commercial one.

Opposite Sarawak, three hundred miles off, at Saigon, the mouth of the Cambodia river, the French possessed a station. Several groups of islands formed a chain across the China Sea at this port, and were chiefly inhabited by Malays, of which it was very important for us to take possession to prevent others doing so. One group, the Latuna, near Sarawak, was already under the influence of Sir James Brooke; and it was desirable we should not let the others slip out of our hands, for in war time they would be the key of the China Sea, and would offer such harbours for an enemy as would give us the greatest trouble and annoyance to drive them out.

With respect to the races of people, the present occupants were, he thought, the remains of a second wave of immigration.

The black race or Papuas, he thought, came in first, and the second wave of Malay or Dyak race followed;—the traditions of the country refer to such an event, and the people speak of a

black race having been there before them. The present race were probably from India, as their religion is a remnant of effete Hinduism approaching Shivaism. In Sarawak, up the river, many Hindu ornaments and remains have been found. Amongst these was a bull, which Sir James Brooke desired to have taken to his residence; but the natives, whose religion is not, however, very exacting in its character, seem to have some lax remembrance of the superstitious worship of their forefathers, and objected to its removal, on the ground that it would offend their tutelary spirits, and bring some calamity on them, such as a tempest, flood, or deluge, by which their crops would be destroyed. They were soon persuaded, however, by his assurance that he would take care of it, and place it in his verandah; so they gave it up, thus showing how little they cared in reality.

The Dyaks of the hills burn their dead, and have other Hindu customs; but practically their religion is only a debased kind of spirit worship. With regard to the people themselves, there were two sets; those on the hills, who resembled our Highlanders; and those of the plains, whose tribes are very much larger in number, and go to sea as pirates, which the hill-tribes do not. The people of these islands were at one time completely locked up, as it were, by the Malays, who infest every spot round the coast, and have established resorts in every convenient place. It is only the large tribes, such as the Sarebas, Sakaraens, and Dyaks, who go boldly out to sea, that can compete with them. After a time, these got to be masters, and often force the Malays to steer their boats. The hill tribes are many, but very much smaller in numbers than the sea-Dyaks; both living under their own chiefs or Orang Koya, which in Africa would be called kings.

The sea-Dyaks are very powerful. The chief never decides himself in capital crimes, but calls a council of the elders, and consults them as to the judgment or punishment to be inflicted. The land-Dyaks are much harsher in features than the sea-Dyaks, who are more like the Malays. Like many other uncivilized nations, they have legends of a better and loftier origin, something like the story of Coelus and Terra. Some will tell you their ancestor was a spirit from above; others, that theirs was a spirit from the water. There is a fish which is taken in their rivers called a "puttin", which they would on no account touch, under the idea that if they did they would be eating their relations. The tradition respecting it is, that a solitary old man went out fishing and caught a "puttin", which he dragged out of the water and laid down in his boat. On turning round, he found it had changed into a very pretty little girl. Conceiving the idea she would make, what he had long wished for, a charming wife for his son, he took her home and educated her until she

was fit to be married. She consented to be the son's wife, cautioning her husband to use her well. Some time after their marriage, however, being out of temper, he struck her, when she screamed, and rushed away into the water; but not without leaving behind her a beautiful daughter, who became afterwards the mother of the race. By other tribes somewhat similar tales are told; for example, one of a man who went out to cut rattans. Finding himself a long way from home, and being weary, he got up into a tree to sleep. While there, he was attracted by the most ravishing music, which ever and anon came nearer and nearer until it seemingly approached the very roots of the tree, when a pure well of water burst out, at the bottom of which were seven beautiful virgins. Ravished at the sight, and determined to make one of them his son's wife, he made a lasso of his rattan and drew her up. The others immediately flew away with a flutter, and the well closed up. Taking his girdle and some of his clothes, he covered her and took her home. After some time, being angry, her husband hit her, when a knife fell with a new bajo from the sky, and she was lifted away, leaving behind her little boy, who became the father of their race.

Their traditions of the creation are also singular. In the beginning, they believe, there were Solitude and Soutan (a Malay word meaning curious person or soul), who could see, hear, speak, but had no limbs, body, or members. This deity is supposed to have lived on a ball, and after some ages to have made two great birds—bullar and erar. He himself did nothing further; but the birds flew round and round, and made the earth, sky, and rivers. Finding the earth greater than the sky, they collected the soil with their feet and piled it up into mountains. They then tried to make man; and for this end they first made trees, but by this means they could not succeed. They then tried to form him out of the rocks, but they could only make statue-like resemblances; and this means was abandoned also. Then they took earth and mixed it with water, and so modelled a man of red clay. When they called to him, he answered; and when they cut him, red blood flowed from the veins. After a time this first man, Tanacompta, brought to life a female child, who gave birth to offspring. The succession of day and night then began; and her progeny became most numerous, and sailed continually up and down on the river. Hitherto the sky had been so near the earth that one could touch it with the hand; but she now raised it up, and put it permanently on props.

There are traditions in more forms than one of the deluge.

Sometimes in my missionary labours I have endeavoured to persuade a Dyak to learn to read; but he would declare that he could not, as he "had lost his book:" he would then narrate how,

in the great storm of waters, the Dyak had been improvident. The white man carefully put his book on his head, and swimming, thus preserved it. The Malay and Chinese, who had crooked, difficult writing, had put theirs under their arms, the consequence being that the writing was much washed out. But the Dyak carelessly put his in his chawat or apron, which was buffeted away from him by the waves, and he lost it altogether. In temperament they are dogged fellows, and adhere pertinaciously to their stories.

Their houses are very peculiar; they are built along the river side on an elevated platform twenty or thirty feet high in a long row, or rather it is a whole village in one row of some hundreds of feet long. The platforms are first framed with beams, and then crossed with laths about two inches wide and two inches apart, and in this way are well ventilated; and nothing remains on the floors, but all the refuse falls through and goes down below. Outside the houses is a verandah twenty to twenty-five feet broad in front; and the back part of the village is divided all along into rooms, which are appropriated to the married people, the young men sleeping on the verandah, where all the weaving, spinning, and other such operations are carried on.

The Dyak is not lazy. He will not work, it is true, in the way we want, but he has always something to do—cutting implements or making domestic articles. The women, too, work very hard; they grow their own cotton and weave it, but they never manufacture enough in the piece for a garment. The fabric is however particularly strong and serviceable, especially in the dense woods and tangles, where one's appearance with one leg clad in red and the other in yellow does not much matter. I have often worn them myself, and found these cotton stuffs of the greatest service as a protection from thorns.

One peculiar form of axe used by them is called a billiong; and a very excellent tool it is. It is very like some of the old stone celts, and in shape is like a small spade, with a square shank; this is set at any angle in a socket of hard wood, and woven with rattan at the end of an elastic twig, of about two feet long, the lower end of which is spliced round with pieces of wood as light as cork, to form a grip for the hand. It is one of the handiest instruments, making at once an axe or adze, chisel, or plane; and with it they can turn a corner or get into a hole, cut a plank as neatly as if sawn, or cut down a big tree far quicker than one of our workmen could with a hatchet.

The lacustrine remains which have been found in Switzerland, and those met with in Ireland, remind one forcibly by their likeness of these Dyak dwellings. The hill-Dyak's house is very different in character. Perched in some inaccessible place, the road to it up

the steep hill is formed by notched stakes placed across, which are taken up in case of alarm or danger, the reason for these precautions being that the Dyaks were always at war with one another, or fearing an attack from other tribes. They were always trying to cut each other's heads off, and every man thus came to look upon another as his enemy. Under the good government of Sir James Brooke these houses were altering in character, in accordance with the greater feeling of security his rule has brought about.

In the attack made on the pirates in 1849, some of the newspapers spoke of the affair as a slaughter of innocent Dyaks. They were unmitigated pirates. From Sakaraen the fellows went down in their proas to Pontianak, the Dutch settlement: after murdering and plundering there, they returned by Sarawak and marauded a village at the Moratabos mouth of the river as they were *en route* to join the fleet attacked by Sir J. Brooke and Capt. Farquhar. These fellows had put into that place just before daylight, as is their custom, and in a twinkling had severed thirteen heads, and wounded a number of people, who were brought to Sarawak for the bishop to cure. One man, a chief, with whom the bishop had had a subsequent conversation, admitted that he was never more sold in his life than by that long black fire-boat (our war-steamer). "I had," he said, "a lot of proas, and about a thousand men; but she went on, splash, splash, push, push, until she pushed over and capsized our boats." These fellows used to be very dangerous; but even there public opinion was working its influence and changing them for the better. Five years ago it was not at all prudent to go on the water in an unarmed boat, but now it is comparatively safe, although even yet one might occasionally feel a little uncomfortable. Some time since one of our missionaries sent four or five men in a boat for provisions and other domestic requirements. The men never returned; and after a time the boat was found smeared with blood, and a man's finger was all that remained of the crew. The truth thus came to light—the sea-Dyaks had taken off their heads. Whatever Sir James Brooke did in his attack was done justly and with mercy. Many were spared that might have been killed; but the effect produced was most beneficial, and the amount of crimes committed has never been so great since that lesson. They are, as we have said, an industrious people, and have made some progress in the smelting of iron ore, which is very rich in the country. They construct a blast of bamboos, and by means of a lever work three or four of their cane cylinders at a time; with these they blow on the iron ore, which is broken up into "nubblets," or small pieces, and put on a hearth until the fire renders it soft, not melted. In the first state the iron has become malleable and capable of being worked

into swords, which they keep very sharp. One side is made convex, and one side flat, and the cut must always be given with the flat side down; they do cut off heads however very quickly with these swords, or “parang ilong.”

In 1857, when all the Europeans were making their escape from the Chinese, who attacked and occupied Sarawak, the bishop collected the women and children and non-combatants, and embarked them on board a native craft to sail away to another river where there was a mission-station. It was a dreadful night, and all the poor creatures were huddled together below vainly endeavouring to keep themselves dry, as the deck, being native fashion, was made only of matting and laths, and leaked throughout. The closeness and steam below, during the night, were most trying; but there was besides a horrid stench, which the bishop's wife and others said they could not possibly endure any longer; so as soon as ever the vessel was brought to in smooth water, a search was made; and a Chinaman's head was found beneath the place where Mrs. McDougall and her children were sitting: it was in a Dyak basket, or Tambuk, and it plainly belonged to a young Dyak who was on board the boat. On being questioned about it, he proudly said it was his, and that he procured it in the “*finest way possible*.” He was prowling about the fort at Sarawak, which the Chinese had taken and occupied, and while they were in it and had myself in their hands there, he went into one of the rooms, lately occupied by the English commander of the fort, and saw a Chinese admiring his own face in a broken looking-glass hanging on the wall. The man did not see him; but his bare neck and stooping head were in so tempting a posture for decapitation, that the Dyak could not resist the temptation, he whipped out his sword, smote off the head at one blow, popped the coveted trophy into his basket, and walked away through the Chinese outside, while the headless trunk of their comrade was yet quivering on the floor of the inner room. On one occasion, two large tribes, the Batang Luper and the Sakerran Dyaks, met to kill a pig, in confirmation of a treaty between them. If the swordsman severed the pig completely, the treaty was good. One of the fellows at a stroke cut the animal right across, but on one of the parts left a little bit of skin. This, it was disputed, would break the treaty, and the parties would have fought then and there but from the strongest persuasion; which fortunately prevailed.

The language of this people presents great difficulty to the missionaries. The Sea Dyak dialects are all akin to Malay, in Sarawak; the Sakerra, Sarchus, and Sebugon Dyaks all speak it; it is the medium of communication between some 100,000 of these people; but with the Land Dyaks, and people of the interior, the case is

different,—the people of almost every river and large tribe having their own language. The Land Dyaks on the two branches of the Sarawak river differ from each other in their speech, as also from the Dyaks of the neighbouring Samarchan and Sodony rivers. The Kyan languages, again, seem to be distinct from the Land Dyak and the Milanow; the Meri and the Malow dialects seem to be closely connected with them: so that in this north-west part of Borneo, we may consider the Sea Dyak, the Land Dyak, and the Kyan as the types of the different dialects spoken by the various and numerous tribes that inhabit it. From their structure they plainly belong to the Turanine family of tongues; and although they now differ so widely from each other, it is, nevertheless, probable that these differences have sprung up gradually from the force of circumstances, which, in their barbarous state, have separated and cut them off from communication with each other. A circumstance which came to my notice, when visiting a tribe in the interior, may account for the way in which dialects alter among people in such a state.

I was sitting with the Chief and Tuahs, who were conversing with me in Malay and talking with each other in their own dialect, when some strange Dyaks came in. Our friends addressed the strangers in Malay, and spoke to each other in something I could not understand. Upon questioning them about it afterwards, they said they spoke in their war language, as they did not trust these strange Dyaks, and did not wish them to understand what they said. It seemed to me that they used a kind of slang or patter they had invented, calling things by wrong names; and it is possible that, in a long-continued state of warfare with a succession of surrounding tribes, these war-tongues may have become their every-day language, and have quite changed their original dialects. They had many words in use for which we had no equivalents; for example, for 'to-morrow,' 'the day after,' and so on, they had special words for each, of a sequence of 'ten' or 'fourteen days'. In the same way they had words for 'rice', according as it was cooked in one way or another.

The Bible is now being translated for the Dyaks, both in the Malay, the Land Dyaks', and the Sea Dyaks' tongues. Their religious ceremonies are peculiar. Practically they consist merely of the fear of the evil spirit, and the desire of a means of propitiating him. They have their wizards and witches, which they call 'manangs', or spirit doctors. When one of them takes on him this office, he takes also a woman's name and clothes, and is allowed a husband, who goes out with him to protect him and to fight for him; at the same time he is also allowed a wife. He is required in cases of sickness, which is attributed to the influence of lost souls, to find out whom is one of his duties. In their in-

cantations they utter some words, of which they do not themselves know the meaning, but which are communicated verbally from one to the other. This mythical language of the 'manangs' is, probably, the remains of a language of some far more ancient tribe.

The hill tribes have the custom of *pamoli*, or taboo, which on certain occasions they enforce with great strictness; they close their houses to all strangers, and no one can go inside under the penalty of death. Some burn, others bury their dead. The Milanows build a death-boat, in which they put the most valuable things with the corpse. In a case within my own knowledge of a chief killed, they sent him adrift thus with thousands of dollars worth of property, which they watched for some time, lest the Malays should plunder it. On another occasion, seeing a boat rolling in a heavy sea, I bore down, thinking I saw a fellow sitting astern and apparently paddling. This was one of their death-boats, but there was so much sea on that I was obliged to leave her. The Sea Dyaks formerly killed slaves for the use of their dead, whom they always provide with food, weapons, etc., for their unknown journey. As to the future of Sarawak, I cannot but consider it to be very promising, if Sir James Brooke is backed up and missionaries properly furnished. The tribes are daily improving; the people feel the Englishman to be their friend; while they dislike the Dutch, who set the Malays to work as middlemen to grind them.

Their earrings and ornaments were then noticed, and the 'dangle' exhibited, which they place on their legs when they dance. The shields of the Sea Dyaks were of two kinds: one, long in form, called 'Utap'; another, round, called 'Pricei'. The way they used the first kind of shield was this: they tried to catch the point of the sword upon it; if this succeeded, it would stick in and be held gripped by the wood, and before his antagonist could get it out, the other fellow would have sliced his head off.

Sir RODERICK MURCHISON congratulated the President on the excellent discourse given by the Bishop of Labuan. The coal mentioned by him in Borneo was probably of tertiary age, for coal was not necessarily of the same age as the English measures. Many coals of later age than the cretaceous period contained 60 per cent. of the force yielded by English coal for steam-power. Tertiary coals from the Adriatic and from Trinidad where Mr. Wall had described a great number of beds (see *Memoir of the Geological Survey*, 1860), were considered by captains in the navy as equally serviceable with some of our best coals. Dr. Percy has analysed some, which is nearly like the true old coal. The limestone rocks, from the specimens brought to him, seemed also to be of tertiary age. Gold was only found in rocks of old geological age. In no part of the world was gold found *in situ* in any secondary or older tertiary rock. Gold chiefly occurred in rocks of the Lower Paleozoic series. The gold *diggings*, on the contrary, were in

regenerated and detrital deposits of various ages from the younger tertiary formation to the alluvia now derived from auriferous mountains.

Sir E. BELCHER stated that he had closely surveyed the coast lying between the positions alluded to by the Bishop, particularly between Sarawak and Labuan, and up the river to Bruné. After quitting the mouths of the Sarawak, no harbours were available for ships of war until reaching Labuan. The rivers, it is true, were entered at high water by small steamers, and when the bars were crossed, deep water was found within. Alluding to the Sarawak entrances, he had taken his ship, a twenty-eight gun frigate, through each; both had water of sufficient depth, and if the shoals were previously studied and boats placed at the entrance, a vessel drawing eighteen feet could enter. The Maratabas bar afforded four and a half fathoms, even at low water springs. The gold, at the periods of his visits, was collected by the Chinese in the disintegrated beds of granite *débris*, which they pound and wash. They contain also diamonds, perfect crystals of corundum, as well as antimony. The main features of Northern Borneo were granite, varied by igneous and metamorphous rocks. Coal occurs near the coast at Labuan, and is visible from the river for forty miles inland. As regards the swords, they have the peculiarity of being ground for felling trees, or using like the cooper's adze, and chisel-like, one side flat, the other bevelled, some right, others left handed. The cloth made by the natives was chiefly composed of grass, and very strong, as well as rough for the skin.

Archdeacon SINCLAIR said that he had been most unexpectedly invited by the President to address the meeting; as his intention was to be a hearer, and not a speaker on the occasion. He was glad, however, to have the opportunity of expressing his entire concurrence in all that had been advanced as to the character of Sir James Brooke, and his eminent services to the cause of Christianity and civilization in the East. He might be allowed to mention that the Rajah, after his late severe illness, had retired to an obscure parish in Devonshire, where, always desirous to be usefully employed, he had consented to undertake the office of churchwarden, and had even discharged the humble duties of a Sunday school teacher, imparting to the village peasantry the elements of religious knowledge. Suddenly he had heard of the imminent danger to which Sarawak was exposed, and of the wide-spread conspiracy which had been formed for the general massacre of the European population. Without a moment's hesitation he hastened to London, prepared for embarkation, and arrived in Borneo, where, by the *prestige* of his name and the energetic measures he adopted, he soon succeeded in restoring peace and order. By a remarkable coincidence, he might be expected to arrive in London that very day, having succeeded during his short absence in placing his government upon a firmer basis than before the recent outbreak.

Mr. LUKE BURKE thought the mythological fables, which had been narrated, exceedingly interesting. Not that such things had much value when individually considered, but they were of great interest when viewed in connection with general mythology. A careful comparison of mythic traditions will often reveal to us their affinities of structure and origin, their stratification and relative antiquity, and the extent of their diffusion, and thus enable us to retrace some of the great monuments of humanity in remote times. He, therefore, thought it exceedingly desirable that all such traditions, however rude and wild, or seemingly valueless, should be carefully collected and recorded.

Capt. PARKER SNOW said that, in his early days, he had been cruising about Borneo, and he felt great interest in the discourse he had heard,

which was of such value that it was extremely desirable a good record should be preserved.

The PRESIDENT said, the Bishop of Labuan's excellent discourse had been reported, and would be printed in the Society's "Proceedings"; and concluded by making some comments on the black race—the Papuas.

DECEMBER 16TH, 1861.

THE meeting announced for this date did not take place, owing to the melancholy decease of his late Royal Highness the Prince Consort.

JANUARY 14TH, 1862.

JOHN CRAWFURD, Esq., President, in the Chair.

The following presents were announced, and the thanks of the Society ordered to be returned to their respective donors.

Précis de la Géographie Universelle, by Malte Brun (presented by J. Crawford, Esq.)—La Geografia di Claudio Tolomea, 2 vols. (Ditto).—Neal's Residence in Siam (Ditto).—Two Years Imprisonment in Burmah (Ditto).—The Athenæum (the Editor).—The Photographic Journal (Ditto).—Journal of the Statistical Society (the Society).

The following new Fellows were announced:—Jonathan Sparrow Crowley, Esq.; James Ellis, Esq.; Capt. J. B. Gasoyne; John P. Gassiot, Esq., F.R.S.; Frank Husband, Esq.; Dyce Nicol, Esq.; George Dalhousie Ramsay, Esq.; William Somerville, Esq.

IV.—*On the Osteology and Dentition of the Aborigines of the Andaman Islands, and the Relations thereby indicated to other Races of Mankind.* By PROFESSOR OWEN, F.R.S., etc.

FOR the long-coveted opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of the osteological and dental characters of the Mincopie race, exemplified by the natives of the Andaman islands, I am indebted to the energetic and accomplished officer of the Indian Government, Dr. F. J. Mouatt, Inspector of Indian Jails, and Director of the late Expedition to Establish a Convict Settlement in these Islands. On that gentleman's return to England in 1861, he submitted to my inspection a considerable proportion of the skeleton of an adult male, killed under the unavoidable circumstances narrated in Dr. F. J. Mouatt's report. The few particulars which I have premised to my description of this skeleton—now presented by Dr. Mouatt to the British Museum—are derived almost exclusively from his full, able, and interesting reports on the islands and their inhabitants.*

* Records of Government of India (For. Dept.), No. xxv.